

Council, occupied the chair, and Mr. F. E. Dodson, of the Central Allotments Committee, and Mr. Giles, Secretary of the National Allotments Society, addressed the conference. Representatives of allotment societies, social service bodies, local authorities and other interested people attended. A big effort is to be made to push the scheme through existing channels and also to extend it still further in rural areas.

**Northampton** County Federation held its quarterly meeting at Kettering. Mr. Morgan, of Imperial Chemical Industries, gave an instructive address on artificial fertilisers, and Mr. Freeman gave a very interesting talk on the way bees transport pollen. Mr. A. D. Rawlings, National Allotments Society Management Committee, dealt with the work and progress of that body. Herr Benshide, a German gentleman who accompanied Mr. Morgan, the President of the Federation, spoke in glowing terms of English gardens and lawns.

**Sheffield** Allotments Federation is conducting an intensive campaign in order to rope in new societies. Through the Press and by means of a panel of able and well-informed speakers it is doing this work. Every month at its Executive Committee it discusses problems and difficulties of its affiliated societies and deals with them effectively. It recently briefed a barrister to appear at a public enquiry in a desperate attempt to save a group of allotments. In this city the Corporation owns 7,552 allotments, of which 2,000 are cultivated by unemployed men. In addition, there are nearly 8,000 plots privately owned.

**Sussex** Area Organisation held a most successful gathering at Shoreham-by-Sea. Mr. A. G. Steers, Secretary, gave an interesting report of the work being carried on. The National Secretary gave an address on the provision of permanent allotments and congratulated the local council upon "resisting the blandishments of the Brighton builders by refusing to sacrifice their allotments to the god of bricks and mortar."

**Willesden** Federation reported that its finances were in satisfactory condition at its annual meeting and particulars of the good work being done were given. By the efforts of this body a reduction of 2s. per pole in allotment rents has been secured. The National Allotments Society was thanked for its services in obtaining the settlement of two claims.

**Yorks. County** Federation meeting held at Conisbrough the other week was one of the most successful yet held. Over 100 allotment and local authority people attended. Mr. Arnold Rowntree gave an inspiring address on the Assistance Scheme, and Mr. Green dealt in an interesting way with the question of Group Holdings. Everybody agreed with Mr. Rowntree's dictum that "what the country needed was more greens"—an amusing allusion to Mr. Green's valuable services. Mr. Tom Williams, M.P.

ke in high praise of the efforts of the allotment movement. The Urban Council entertained the Federation to a splendid tea, after which the General Secretary of the National Allotments Society gave an address on co-operative trading.

## MISTAKES IN SOIL MANAGEMENT

BY JOHN STONEY

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A GREAT many mistakes are made in the treatment of soils. Novices labour under the impression that it is quite soon enough to dig and manure when seed sowing and planting time arrives in spring. Never was a greater mistake made. No wonder that seeds refuse to germinate and plants to grow properly. By leaving soil undug all winter it will often turn up like lumps of concrete, and be difficult to work.

Heavy soils especially should be trenched, keeping the subsoil in the bottom, and no attempt should be made to break the clods. The rougher it is left the better. Atmospheric influences will assist considerably in weathering and breaking down stiff soils, and increased depth of soil encourages greater porosity, which means so much to plants. Water descends to a lower level, thereby leaving the pores of the upper soil to be filled with air instead of water. Stagnant water shuts out the air and poisons the surface soil, kills the nitrifying bacteria and renders the soil cold. By getting rid of the stagnant water the air which takes its place oxidizes the latent plant foods and sets these free for plants to feed on, making the soil drier and warmer. Dig, ridge, or trench your soils in winter; do not wait until spring. Always trench a new garden or a neglected one when you first take it in hand. Do not forget the importance of frequently forking soil over early in the spring to ensure a fine tilth or overlook the desirability of frequently hoeing the surface between crops.

## LIMING AND MANURING SOILS

Some of us know the value of lime, and I am not going to enter into detail, but I must congratulate the National on the introduction of the "Analoam" Soil Indicator. It is very simple to operate. But be guarded against using too much lime unless the soil indicator shows extreme acidity according to the colour chart. An excess of lime applied to a soil will act as a steriliser and much harm is often done by applying it excessively. As a guide, use 7 lb. per rod (30½ sq. yds.) to soils when the colour indicates a faintly acid soil. If a red-crimson colour 14 lb. per rod should be used.

Always apply lime to the surface, let it wash down, or scarify it into the soil with a fork during dry weather.